



# Staff News

*The Electronic Newsletter About YA Staff — For YA Staff*  
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## Harper Sets Goals for Next 12 Months

Recently, California Youth Authority Director **Jerry L. Harper** issued a series of “all staff” memos to keep employees informed on his priorities and the status of several key issues, including the ongoing focus on institutions such as the El Paso de Robles Youth Correctional Facility (EPdRYCF).

This facility has been the recent focus of investigations and inspections. The Inspector General and CYA’s own Internal Affairs have visited, and asked questions of staff. The San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury visited and issued a report as part of its annual visit to the institution. In addition, the Department has requested an operational performance analysis by the Board of Corrections.

Mr. Harper has visited all the institutions since he took the helm of the Department and has made it a point to talk with line staff and others in the institutions. He is planning to visit the camps next.

Each entity that has toured any YA facility has expressed that the majority of staff appear to be doing an excellent job. This reveals that while the Department has had its challenges, moving forward may not be a difficult task for those willing to make the commitment.

Although the investigations focused on staff conduct and facility performance, staff safety has become an increasing area of focus for the Director. Gassing incidents have been on the increase, as have physical attacks by wards on staff. These issues are also priorities as we move ahead, Harper said.

There is good coming from this period of reflection and analysis. Mr. Harper has asked his executive staff to sponsor 10 key areas of concern and to develop a working plan with achievable goals, where improvement can be measured over the next year. **(The Ten Directives to Achieve Excellence on Page 2.)**

“I welcome your suggestions and feedback and hope to have your assistance as we move forward,” Mr. Harper told staff in a recent memo outlining the areas of concern. “My plan is to keep you informed of the progress in these areas.”

Another priority for Mr. Harper is better communications between the directorate and staff, keeping staff informed on any issues and changes that will effect their work environment.

Your suggestions and ideas in these areas are welcome. Mr. Harper invites all staff to contact his office or an Executive Committee member with your idea. The success of this endeavor depends on your contributions to the process.



## Laser Eye Treatment Available to State Workers

Effective June 15, 2000, Vision Service Plan (VSP), the State’s vision benefit provider, is offering its new Laser Vision Care Program to State employees enrolled in VSP. VSP’s Laser Vision Care Program provides a 20-25% discount to participants for laser surgery when services are provided by a VSP surgery facility and doctor. VSP will offer these discounts to

State employees at no additional cost to the employer or employees. Visit VSP’s web site at [www.vsp.com](http://www.vsp.com), to learn more about laser vision correction or contact your VSP doctor to check if he or she is participating in the program. This benefit will be offered for the length of the current VSP contract, through December 31, 2000.

# The Ten Directives to Maintain Excellence

- **Restricted Programs** - Examine existing policies related to all wards on a restricted program (23/1) to ensure consistency among institutions on adherence to policy, procedures and legal requirements.
- **Vacancies, Recruitment and Retention** - Faced with a significant number of line-staff vacancies, study and assemble an action plan to initiate an aggressive recruitment effort necessary to assure adequate staffing in the years ahead.
- **Training** - Examine all training programs and needs and determine how adequate training opportunities can be provided to staff to do their jobs.
- **Mental Health Treatment** - Examine existing policies and practices related to mental health treatment and ensure staffing and treatment is consistent throughout the department and adequate to meet changing dynamics of ward populations and legal requirements.
- **Medical Programs** - Examine existing policies and practices related to medical care and ensure that staffing and treatment is adequate to meet changing dynamics of ward populations and legal requirements.
- **Use of Force** - Review existing policies for use of force and enhance training curricula to ensure consistency with policy as well as updating of equipment.
- **Special Education Compliance** - Ensure compliance and update policies to accommodate the increasing special education needs of the current ward population.
- **Compliance Monitoring** - Establish a compliance unit to ensure uniformity of policies and procedures throughout all CYA institutions and offices.
- **Management Information Systems** (computer databases) - Examine existing manual systems for data collection and develop methods to migrate this information to readily available, real-time electronic databases.
- **Staff Interaction with Wards** - Examine existing policies and practices related to staff over-familiarity with wards and determine the role increased training might provide to avoid future problems.

# Preston's Multicultural Celebration

The Preston Youth Correctional Facility recognized the many different cultures of this state during its annual Multicultural Celebration in May.

Both the theme, "We the People," and the slogan, "We the people make this planet happen," were selected from among numerous entries submitted by the wards.

Guests from the surrounding community were invited to participate in judging the art, essay and poetry, and talent competitions. The winners of the talent competition were featured in a talent show, which was held at the institution's auditorium on May 25.

Points were awarded for participation and for winning efforts in each competition. The top three living units Juniper, Cedar, and Fir Lodges won cash prizes from the Ward Benefit Fund to use for special lodge activities; Juniper Lodge the grand prize winner also gained possession of a perpetual trophy until next year's celebration.

The annual celebration encourages wards to look at the rich diversity around them and to appreciate the contributions all of the various ethnic and cultural groups that make up Preston, our country, and the world.

The celebration takes many months of planning and preparation, but staff who donate their time and energy believe strongly in the goal of the celebration: to provide opportunities for students to learn about others from different ethnic groups, work with them despite their differences, and prepare themselves to re-enter the community as responsible and socially aware citizens.

## Reality Check at O.H. Close

O.H. Close Youth Correctional Facility has a "Reality Check" diversion program for county juvenile justice agencies and probation departments throughout Northern California. The "Reality Check" program has been in operation for approximately six years. The program is led by wards from the Fresno Ward Aid and Glenn Hall living units. TTS **Randy Aguirre**, SYCC **Rudy Luna** and Parole Agent **Tom Kirkbride** coordinate the Reality Check Program.

In the program, "at risk youth," county probation wards, their parents and county staff travel to O.H. Close. Wards from the Fresno Ward Aide and Glenn Hall programs present information regarding criminal lifestyles, victimization, consequences of dangerous behaviors, gangs, family violence, etc. The wards answer questions and the youth are provided with sack lunches. The youth are then given a tour to Johanna Boss High School and they are taken to a living unit. The counties currently participating in this program are San Joaquin, Sacramento, and Stanislaus, and the Vallejo Youth Services via the Vallejo Police Department. Approximately 400 "at risk youth" have participated in this program during the past six years and Fresno and Glenn Hall wards have accumulated over 100 community service hours. For additional information on the Reality Check program please contact TTS Randy Aguirre at O.H. Close YCF.

## Retirements: 133.75 Years of Services

### Ventura

**Dr Wayne Allen-** Teacher  
Effective July 17, 2000  
Years of State Service: 19

**Robert Boysen-** YCC  
Effective: July 31, 2000  
Years of State Service: 16

### San Jose Parole

**Charles Dennis**  
PAII, Specialist  
Effective July 10, 2000  
Years of State Service: 28

**Adrian Sandoval --** PA I  
Effective June 1, 2000  
Years of State Service: 31

## Employees of the Month

### June

**Fred C. Nelles**  
**Samuel Grimes**  
Youth Correctional Counselor

### July

**Fred C. Nelles**  
**Carol Mann**  
Office Assistant

### August

**HGS**  
**Pete Hansen**  
Stationary Engineer

**VYCF**  
**Dr. Wayne Allen**  
Music Teacher

**Fred C. Nelles**  
**Grace Thatcher**  
Teaching Assistant

### Watts Parole Office

**LaRue Floyd-** Office Assistant I  
Effective: May 2, 2000  
Total CYA Service: 10 yrs. 3 mos.  
Total State Service: 11 yrs. 3 mos.

**Robert Elston-** Parole Agent II-  
Specialist  
Effective: July 1, 2000  
Total State & CYA Service: 28 yrs.  
5 mos.

## Health Benefit Plan Premium Increases

Premiums for the health plans in the CalPERS Health Program will be increasing effective January 1, 2001. These increases could affect your pay check or retirement check. On average, the rates for Basic Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) will increase 9.2 percent; Basic Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs) 18.8 percent; Medicare-coordinated HMOs 31.7 percent; and Medicare-coordinated PPOs 22.7 percent.

An important point to keep in mind is that this year's Open Enrollment period for Health, Dental, Flex-Elect and Consolidated Benefits (Co-Ben) has been condensed. The Open Enrollment period will be October 1 through October 31, 2000.

## Baby Front

For those of you who know **Marilyn Tomka**, of the Master File Unit, she is celebrating the birth of her first grandchild. **Charles Frances Xavier Smith** was born to **Craig** and **Ashlee Smith** at 4:16 am August 4. Baby Charles is 20 inches tall and weighs a whopping 9 lb. 11 oz. All are fine and resting.

## Staff Movement

### Allison Nicholson Moves to HQ

Effective Monday, July 24, **Allison Nicholson** has been temporarily reassigned to the Institutions and Camps Branch office at Headquarters in Sacramento.



## Staff News

*The electronic Edition*

The *Staff News* is published on the first and third Wednesday of the month by the California Youth Authority's Office of Communications and Public Affairs.

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Please submit any stories or articles for publication during the second and fourth week of each month. Pictures must be 35mm or digital. When possible, submit your stories as attachments to an E-mail to: **Julio Calderon**, jcalderon@cya.ca.gov.